

USDA/Rural Development

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News Release

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USDA AWARDS \$176,266 DISTANCE LEARNING/TELEMEDICINE GRANT

Hillsboro, Texas, August 28, 2002—The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced the selection of 45 Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grants totaling \$11.4 million, providing greater educational opportunities and medical service to rural citizens in 26 states.

“The grants announced today underscore our commitment at USDA to work with communities to develop and improve access to rural health care and education,” said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman.

In Texas, five recipients were awarded grants. Hill College, located in Hillsboro, received a \$176,266 grant, in conjunction with matching funds from the college, to install three distance learning classrooms that will connect to the existing regional Educational Service Center network. The classrooms will enable targeted high school students to take college credit courses. Students will also be able to utilize workforce training and take vocational courses in areas of childcare, health technician and information processing fields.

“Everyone who has played a role in extending telecommunications service to rural America should be very proud of what has been accomplished,” said Bryan Daniel, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Texas. “The communication lines you help build and maintain are truly the life lines of the nation’s rural heartland.”

In total, 22 distance education grants (\$5.1 million), and 23 telemedicine grants (\$6.3 million) were selected for funding. The education projects will help 306 schools provide 152,678 students with educational tools to better equip them for the global digital economy. An estimated two million rural residents will have access to better, faster, and more modern health care by more than 100 medical service providers participating in these projects.



USDA's Rural Utilities Service administers the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs, and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service.

Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting the Hillsboro Local Service Center at (254) 582-7328, Ext. 4 or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

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The USDA Rural Development mission area was created in 1994 and includes the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, the Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Utilities Service. Its mission is to use the resources of USDA to provide an improved quality of life for the nation's 53 million rural people.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs in Texas, check our web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.